

ABROAD

JOHANNESBURG

Economic sanctions and the increasing violence in South Africa are driving white South Africans with British passports—or claims to them—to leave the country in increasing numbers. There are 800,000 such South Africans, many of them highly qualified professionals. Recent monthly figures show 1,354 emigrants, as opposed to 523 immigrants, with nearly all those leaving going to Britain or Australia. All told, six thousand whites are expected to leave South Africa this year. Many more would probably leave were it not for currency restrictions. Each family is allowed to take out 100,000 rands in assets, but only in the so-called financial rand, worth half the regular rand, which has itself fallen drastically in value in the past two years. The financial rand is now worth less than twenty cents U.S.

BELGRADE

A Train That Did

Neighboring Albania has ceased to be the only country in Europe without a railroad. A 16-mile stretch of track between Titograd in Montenegro and Shkodra in northern Albania was inaugurated recently, and Albanian raw materials such as chrome ore can now be shipped to world markets. Under the longtime rule of the Communist tyrant Enver Hoxha, Albania had been the most isolated country in the world. It continued to follow a strict Stalinist line after Yugoslavia broke with the Soviet Union in 1948, and then, in 1961, switched to an alliance with Red China, the only European Communist country to do so. Now that Hoxha is dead, the successor government is cautiously investigating what lies beyond its frontiers. The official Yugoslav news agency commented that if the Albanian leadership had not chosen Stalin over Tito, this piece of railroad could have been inaugurated 35 years ago.

CANTON

First Again

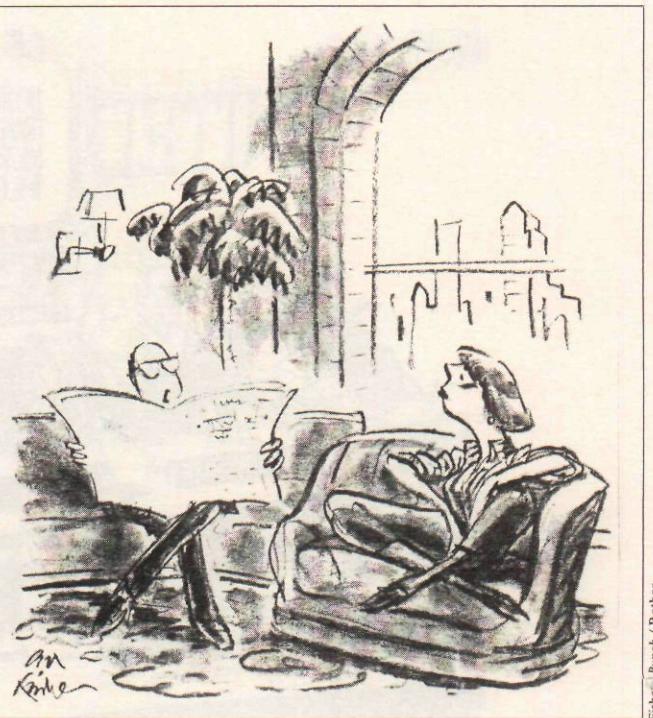
The great South China port of Canton has become once again the country's principal exporter. In the nineteenth century, Canton was the port of entry for most Western traders, including those from the United States. But in recent times, Canton languished until it received a new impetus to foreign trade in the late 1970s. For the first half of this year, exports from Canton Province rose by 46.7 per cent, to \$1.8 billion (in the rest of the People's Republic, by contrast, exports rose only 13.7 per cent, to \$12.8 billion). At the same time the Canton region has been the focus of 60 per cent of all foreign investment in China, most of it from Chinese in Hong Kong, who have put in a total of \$2.3 billion. Emigration from Canton began with the opening of Chinese ports at the end of the Opium War 144 years ago. Since then, an estimated thirty million Chinese have left for Southeast Asia, the West Coast of North America, Europe, and Latin America. Today the descendants of these groups are playing a part in China's growth both through direct investment and joint development projects, and by serving as conduits between China and other markets of the Pacific Basin. They have been in large measure responsible for carrying the export

level of Canton ahead of those of both Shanghai and Liao-ning, former leaders in the field. The semi-annual Canton Fair has reasserted its position as the major feature of China's trade program; it will remain so as long as there is a need for foreign exchange. Visitors to the fair today stay in luxury hotels, dine in French restaurants, and ride in limousine taxis.

RHEIMS

Homing In

The craze for hot-air ballooning that swept the United States has spread to France, coming full circle and leaving France in the awkward position of having to import examples of its native technology. Balloon champion Hélène Dorigny suddenly realized that the manufacturing of *montgolfières*—as balloons are known, after their eighteenth-century developers—scarcely existed in her native country. In 1984 she set up a balloon atelier near here and contacted American makers for licenses and experience. The first French balloon was delivered last year, and since then the workshop has turned out forty of them. Special care is required in the design of the envelopes, which in almost every case are decorated with advertising slogans. The gondolas are made elsewhere in France; the burners are still imported from the United States. The balloons range in size from a one-person ship with 780 cubic yards of hot-air capacity to ten-person ships with 7,800 cubic yards. The most popular balloon is halfway in between, capable of lifting five passengers. Each balloon of this type costs 100,000 to 150,000 francs (\$15,400 to \$23,100), according to the complexity of the design and the color of the envelope. The business has its peculiar hazards. Mme. Dorigny doesn't like to talk about an evening last July when she took off from the square in front of the great Gothic pile of Rheims cathedral. Her balloon, caught in a sudden gust of wind, stuck on one of the cathedral's spires.



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